

Resources ▾

Leading Ideas ▾

Stewardship ▾

Reaching Others ▾

Pastoral Excellence ▾

Learning ▾

About ▾

You Are At: Home » Leading Ideas » What is Your Faith Development Process?

Leading Ideas



| What is Your Faith Development Process?

By Bob Farr And Kay Kotan On June 17, 2015

Leading Ideas

Share:



How does someone in your church go from being new to being an authentic follower of Jesus Christ? Many churches provide really fuzzy answers to this question. We often hear people say, "That is what Sunday school is for, right?" We have come to believe that if we come to worship, attend Sunday school, serve on a couple of committees, and participate in Vacation Bible School, somehow we become disciples. We have come to believe this happens by osmosis — if you come to the church and hang around a bit, you will develop into an authentic follower of Jesus Christ.

“ We have people who have been with us for a very long time, but their faith isn’t necessarily any deeper than when they were confirmed.

Many churches we encounter have at best an unintentional faith development process that leads people to church membership rather than discipleship. This unintentional approach produces people who worked really hard operating the church. It added a lot of busyness to a lot of already busy lives. And we have mistaken busyness as discipleship.

Because many have not thought this through, there may not be a set of character traits, beliefs, daily rituals, behaviors, or expectations outlined or taught in many of our local churches. In fact, we may not even be sure that we should be describing an outcome. Consequently, we have a shortage of discipleship. We have people who have been with us for a very long time, but their faith isn’t necessarily any deeper than when they were confirmed. They are good, moral, nice people, but not necessarily disciples of Jesus Christ.

Subscribe f

Every Wednesday. Lea
and strategies f

E-Mai

| Search

Search ...



| The Right Question

**Leaders do not need
Leaders must have i**

Trevor Dancer, pastor
in Kansas City, Misso
question in a sermon

*If people knew how m
to give more themse*

Want more *Right Question
Leaders.*

What Does an Authentic Follower of Jesus Look Like?

The very first myth we must debunk is that an intentional faith development process is creating a required curriculum. The journey of faith development is not curriculum identification. Rather it is how to grow more Christlike. What are the traits, beliefs, and experiences that the church desires people to have in order to grow in their faith and live it out daily? What would you want people to know and experience so that their daily lives are changed to walk closer to Christ?

Your pastor and leaders must work through for themselves what they think an authentic follower of Jesus Christ would look like. It may not be perfect, and it may change over time. But if you haven't designed a target to hit, you won't hit anything. Bishop Robert Schnase's book *Five Practices of Fruitful Living* is an attempt to help us set a target by giving some markers for an authentic follower of Jesus Christ.

A Way of Life

We will never fully finish our spiritual work, thus the spiritual growth pathway will have no ending point either. We sometimes must rediscover a spiritual discipline, go deeper, or see in a new context where we are in our own spiritual journey. This isn't a checklist but a pathway for spiritual growth and maturity. It is a map or guide that allows us to grow deeper in our faith. The Christian life is a way of life. It is not an exact science, but it is a life of practices. Therefore, you need to know the practices in order to live that way of life.

Creating a Pathway

There is no one, perfect, clear-cut discipleship path. We recommend that congregations assemble a discipleship or faith development team to create a pathway or process. One church developed a process known as The Quest, which provides for four different ways that adults can connect to small groups, Sunday school, service projects, and so on. Those four ways are Explore, Connect, Grow, and Unleash. All of their existing small-group ministries were redefined according to these components, and every new small group, whether through Christian education or service, is created with this intentional faith development classification in mind. It is best to roll out new opportunities to engage in intentional faith development at least twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. Some may be resistant to doing things differently, but new people will come in under this process, and that is most important.

This article is condensed from Bob and Kay's book *Ten Prescriptions for a Healthy Church* (Abingdon Press, 2015), a self-guided church transformation process with a workbook to be used with a coach. It can be purchased through [Amazon](#) or [Cokesbury](#).

Related Resources:

- Five Practices of Fruitful Living a Conversation with Robert Schnase
- Four Doors that Lead to Faith Development by Cary S. Miller
- Tips for Strengthening Adult Education by Ann A. Michel
- A Keystone Habit for Our Time by Jim Pledger

Discipleship



Faith Formation

Reach New Disciples

Spirituality

Spirituality and Leadership

Share.



About Author

Bob Farr

Bob Farr is director of congregational excellence in the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church.


Kay Kotan

Kay Kotan is director of Congregational Development for the Susquehanna Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. She is a credentialed coach, church consultant, speaker, and author. She has served on the Healthy Church Initiative Executive Team for the Missouri Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. She is the author of several books, most recently Small Church Checkup.

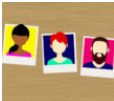
People rarely appreciate themselves inside friends and self-confir are constantly reinfor

Yuval Harari


| Most Popular Posts




February 1, 2018
Developi




March 7, 2018
When Cl



February 1, 2018
16 Signs on Discip



February 1, 2018
Boring A Announc



March 14, 2018
7 Ways \ the Right

| Most Popular Topics

Books

Change

Community Outreach

Congregational F

Evangelism

Fait

Fruitfulness

Func

Hospitality

Lay Leade

Leadership Best Pr

Lessons for Le

Millennials

Mission

Pastoral Ministry

Planning and Visioning

Reach New

Serve Your Neighbor

Stewardship

Ta

Related Posts

March 14, 2018

Moving Beyond Church in A Box

March 13, 2018

Reaching More Diverse People in Suburbs

February 21, 2018

Developing an Intentional Discipleship System

Worship

Worship

Optimizin

\$75.00

Developi

\$59.00

Theology

\$59.00

Adult Education Studies from the Wesley Ministry Network

The Wesley Ministry Network brings the best of contemporary Christian scholarship to your congregation's small groups and adult Bible studies. These video-based group study courses encourage the energetic discussion and personal reflection that are keys to a life of informed discipleship. Courses are designed for use in small groups in a wide range of denominations, but they are also appropriate for individuals seeking self-study opportunities. [Learn more now.](#)

Ecumenical studies: *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* | *Journey through the Psalms* | *Devotion to Jesus: The Divinity of Christ in Earliest Christianity* | *Serious Answers to Hard Questions* | *Religion and Science: Pathways to Truth* | *In God's Time* | *A Life Worthy of the Gospel* | *Women Speak of God*

United Methodist studies: *Methodist Identity — Part 1: Our Story; Part 2: Our Beliefs* | *Wesleyan Studies Project — Series I: Methodist History; Series II: Methodist Doctrine; Series III: Methodist Evangelism*

<div>Connect</div> <div>Lewis Center for Church Leadership Wesley Theological Seminary New phone number (202) 664-5700 Fax (202) 885-8605 lewiscenter@wesleyseminary.edu 4500 Massachusetts Ave., NW Washington, DC 20016</div>	<div>Resources</div> <div>Tool Kits 50 Ways Leading Ideas Articles Leading Ideas Talks Podcast Books To the Point Sheets Free Videos Online Learning Research Clergy Age Trends</div> <div>Leading Ideas</div> <div>Subscribe Articles Leading Ideas Talks Podcast Authors Topics Reprint Info</div>	<div>Stewardship</div> <div>Giving and Generosity Church Finances Clergy Personal Finances</div> <div>Reaching Others</div> <div>Reach New Disciples Serve Your Neighbor</div> <div>Pastoral Excellence</div> <div>LPLI-360 Evaluation Preventing Misconduct Pastoral Transitions Young Clergy Lewis Fellows Clergy Mentoring Clergy Evaluation Clergy Personal Finances Focus for Denominational Leaders DS Resources BOM Resources</div>	<div>Learning</div> <div>Leadership D.Mir Online Learning Lewis Fellows Wesley Theologi Lewis Communit</div> <div>About</div> <div>Staff News</div> <div>Shop</div> <div>Adult Christian E Stewardship Vide Leadership Exce Reach New Disci PDF Ebooks</div> <div>Donate</div> <div>Lovett H. Weems</div>
© 2018 Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary			